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Special BHNC 25th
Anniversary Edition!

New Bernal Journal

515 CORTLAND AVE - SAN FRANCISCO - CALIFORNIA - 94110

SERVING THE BERNAL HEIGHTS NEIGHBORHOOD OF SAN FRANCISCO SINCE 1964

iSección Especial! NBJ en Español: Páginas 9-11

BHNC Celebrates 25 Years of Serving Bernal Heights

A Quarter-Century of the BHNC: The Bernalians & Their History

by Adam Kinsey

From points all over the eastern side of San Francisco, you can see Bernal Hill. Its gentle slopes are a landmark, green a few weeks each year, but mostly a soft fawn with occasions of blinding gold when the sun reflects off dried grass in August. The hill rises from a thicket of buildings and freeways that is the liminal zone between the Mission and the Outer Mission neighborhoods. It is gatekeeper to parts of the City sometimes people forget. Unless you live there. Then it's what you judge all the rest by.

Part of this treasured place is the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center on Cortland Avenue. Twenty-five years ago in 1978, it grew out of a neighborhood need. Today the BHNC continues answering the community's needs-some the same as when it was founded, some very different. What follows is a brief overview of the Center's history. It is certainly not all of it-many who read this will have their own stories and

memories-but this is a rough sketch of how the BHNC has come to be, what it is today, and how it has served the community.

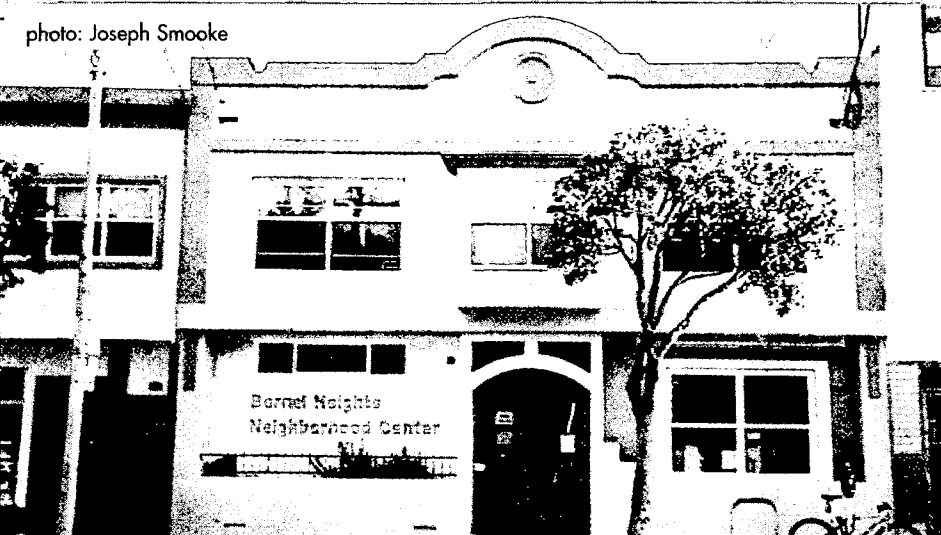
In 1978, during one of San Francisco's regular real estate booms, the 500 residents who were members of the Northwest Bernal Block Club fought and stopped the building of eleven market-rate houses on Bernal. Achieving this, the community was faced with the need to devise a plan for appropriate growth. A glib editorial in the May 23, 1978 Examiner, titled "'Secessionists' on Bernal Heights," described the plan as follows:

The Bernalians-we have just coined the term-want nothing less than virtual autonomy from the City and County of San Francisco. In a city that has just been fragmented into districts, they now propose the ultimate fragmentation, amounting virtually to block-by-block self determination. Credit though, where credit is earned. This Bernalian fancy could only have come from a people of high creativity, energy, civic pride and, let's face it, plenty of brass.

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photo: Joseph Smooke



Then and Now--Top: BHNC at the time of its acquisition in 1978 Bottom: The BHNC in 2003

East L.A.'s TIERRA Headlining 15th Annual Fiesta on the Hill

Volunteers Still Needed

By Jack Chalmers, Neil Smith, and
Mauricio Vela

On Sunday, October 19th from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Cortland Avenue becomes an arts & crafts market, resource center, playground, perform-

ance venue and dance floor. Fiesta on the Hill is Bernal Height's annual celebration of music, visual and performing arts, community building and neighborhood diversity.

Fiesta is family-friendly, is easily accessible, with free live performances, affordably priced games, ethnic foods

and non-alcoholic beverages and a children's area featuring a petting zoo, pony rides, pumpkin patch, face painting. Come enjoy games, a dunking booth, street chalk art and activities for Kids of all ages.

Two stages - east and west - will anchor the street with live music and performing art. We are pleased that Tony Sandoval of KISS-FM 98.1 as our media sponsor, will introduce our headliner, Tierra. "Tierra was born in 1971 during the heyday of the Chicano movement when there was a political and social consciousness", according to Rudy Salas the groups co-founder and leader. "Racial pride is the key element of the groups style. We also emphasize cultural pride." It's not unusual for TIERRA to put on their zoot suits while performing their rendition of "Zoot Suit Boogie". A ground-breaking Latin group, blending funk, Motown, rock and R & B, Tierra with hits such "Are we in Love?", "Gonna Find Her", and

"Together" were the first Latino band to have 4 songs on the national charts. Thirty two years later, Tierra is still played on radio stations across the south west, and headlining concerts in Albuquerque, Los Angeles, and San Jose. Safari one of the Bay Area's best-kept secrets, with sounds straight out of SF's Mission District, fuses 70s Latin rock with the flavors of New York City salsa. The songs are all dance-hall favorites, guaranteed to keep Fiesta-goers dancing till sunset. Aphrodesia a SF based Afro-funk band combines elements of African, Cuban and Brazilian traditional music, with funk and electronica. Heathrow composed of 2 Brits and 2 Americans, produces a true transatlantic alternative-rock sound. Ted Czuk is a SF songwriter who has served time as a jazz sax-man, rock guitar player, country bass player and blues pianist. LaB RaTs, Bernal's own, local guys who like to get together and play highly

Continued on page 8



Pioneering Latin group Tierra headlines the 15th Annual Fiesta on the Hill Oct. 19th.

The New Bernal Journal

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The New Bernal Journal is a
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sored by the
Bernal Heights Neighborhood
Center.

It is dedicated to providing the
people of Bernal Heights with
their community's news, ideas,
issues and events which support
the center mission:

To preserve and enhance the eth-
nic, cultural and economic diver-
sity and well-being of the Bernal
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build a strong community for all,
with a focus on the needs of low
and moderate-income people.
We do this by providing services
to support and increase opportu-
nities for seniors, youth and oth-
ers most at-risk; by preserving
and expanding access to afford-
able housing; and by building
the neighborhood's power and
capacity to achieve these goals.
We commit to being a provider
of essential services, a builder of
community, and a force for
organizing neighborhood
change.

The New Bernal Journal is
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Please make all computer disk
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email them to: nbj@bhnc.org



A Message from the Executive Director of the BHNC

Dear Neighbors and Friends:

It is with great pleasure that I introduce a special edition of the New Bernal Journal in celebration of Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center's 25th Anniversary. I wish we had more time to really research the history of the Center and give credit to the many groups and individuals who helped make the BHNC what it is today. Beginning on the front page you'll find an abbreviated history, we probably could of used the entire issue but with many other activities taking place this month we had to stop.

We are going to take time to celebrate our 25 years of history with a two-day celebration on Thursday, October 16, and Sunday, October 19. On Thursday BHNC will honor four individuals and two institutional partners, along with a presentation of foods from our neighboring restaurants and music from local artists. Please see the 25th Anniversary gala article on page three. On Sunday, October 19, we will hold our 15th annual Fiesta On The Hill. This year's headliner is TIERRA, a Latin rock/motown group based out of East Los Angeles. They're a lot of fun and play great music. Dr. Bernie Gonzalez, III was very instrumental in securing TIER-RA. Many other bands and performers will be showcased, as well as great food, artists, and information booths. Volunteers are greatly needed. Please see the story on front cover.

We could not have produced this great two-day celebra-
tion without the tremendous corporate and individual spon-
sorship support. Please see the list of current supporters
below. It is not too late to lend your support and be listed in
the Anniversary program and December/January New
Bernal Journal.

As part of the 25th Anniversary, we have been working
feverishly, to complete the renovation of the Neighborhood
Center. I wanted to publicly thank Richard Calderon of RC
Window & Doors Specialists, for his expertise as the general
contractor and his generosity with his time and labor to
complete the renovation on time and within budget. Please
see his ad in the paper. We also wanted thank Jon Pon and
Lily Woo of the Mayor's Office of Community Development
for their support, patience, and willingness to work with
BHNC staff to stretch the funding as far as possible and
their valuable suggestion on implementing the renovation
plans.

In addition to our 25th anniversary activities, we're partic-
ipating in a number of Excelsior community events that the
Center wants you to know about and invites you to attend.
On October 1st, in partnership with the Excelsior Action
Group, the BHNC will open the ENCoRe (Excelsior
Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization) office at 4651
Mission St. at Ocean. The office will also host the BHNC's
Excelsior Neighborhood Elder Support Team (homebound

senior services) and the Excelsior unit of the Mission
Economic Development Association (MEDA). On October
8th, from 11:30 AM - 1:00PM, Mission Housing
Development Corporation and BHNC will break ground on
a 37 unit affordable senior housing development located at
5199 Mission by Geneva Avenue (see page xx). Lunch and
entertainment will be provided. On October 12th, from
11:00 AM - 6:00 PM, the BHNC is co-producing with the
Excelsior Action Group the first annual Excelsior Festival on
Persia at Mission Street. Similar to BHNC's Fiesta, the
Excelsior Festival is a free community event with the intent to
make Mission Street a shopping destination and increase
community pride.

Finally, I would like to welcome three new BHNC employ-
ees. Kristen Atkinson, our new Greater Mission Consortium
coordinator/Youth Services Director, Amy Diaz-Infante, our
Americorp member, and Cristy Johnston, our new Excelsior
Neighborhood Commercial Revitalization project manager.
We're excited to have these new staff members join us in the
BHNC tradition of improving and building healthy communi-
ties.

Please join us at all of the above mentioned activities,
especially our 25th anniversary dinner on Thursday,
October 16th. It's a fundraiser and celebration that will rec-
ognize past accomplishments and fund future challenges.

Happy 25th Anniversary to all.

Sincerely,

Bernal Heights Applauds The
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Anniversary & Fiesta on the Hill

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Holly Park (\$500) Four Star Video - David Ayooob	List includes sponsors of \$250 and up, as of September 29, 2003

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NBJ En Español

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BHNC Celebrates 25th Anniversary with Gala Dinner

On Thursday evening October 16, 2003 the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center will host its 25th Anniversary Gala Dinner Event: Tastes & Sounds of Bernal at Union Square's Crowne Plaza Hotel. The evening will begin with a reception showcasing the fare of Bernal's finest restaurants, including: Blue Plate, Liberty Café, Palatino and Valentina's Ristorante - wine is being provided by The Good Life Grocery and delicious dessert will be provided by Maggie Mudd's and Lelenita's Bakery!

The reception will include entertainment by Familia Govea and other local Bernal artists and a silent auction featuring lovely and unique gifts donated by many generous local businesses and individuals. All proceeds from the evening go to support the dynamic community programs of the BHNC, which have touched thousands of individuals' lives.

To acknowledge the generosity of time and resources during the past 25 years, the BHNC will honor Buck Bagot, Bebe Castaing, Scott Cunningham, Bill Sorro, Bank of America and San Francisco Foundation - tickets to the dinner-event are \$75 per person and sponsorship opportunities are still available. For more information on purchasing tickets to the dinner or on how to participate, please phone Jack Chalmers at 415-206-2140 ext 161.

The event benefits the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center, a non-profit, community based organization serving seniors, youth and low income residents. ■

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Letters to the Editor

The NBJ welcomes letters from our readers. Letters must be received by the 15th of every odd month. Letters are published according to editorial discretion and available space. To submit mail to NBJ 515 Cortland Ave, SF CA 94110. Or email nbj@bhnc.org.

What Price Democracy?

by Tom Gallagher

Among the disturbing trends emerging in this year's mayoral campaign is the frequent absence of opinion poll-front runner Gavin Newsom from mayoral debates and forums. Apparently his campaign explains that his inability to attend many of the events at which his rivals are present is due to his brisk schedule of fundraising house parties. These events will in turn allow him to purchase advertising on television, radio, mailers -- and in neighborhood newspapers like this one -- in which he can present his point of view without interference either from a questioning public or the opposing points of view of the other candidates.

To be sure, there are few candidates for political office who haven't walked away from a candidates forum thinking that they've just wasted their time in speaking to a disappointingly small crowd that probably contained not a single uncommitted voter. But the fact is that democracy is a messy business and trudging out there night after night to face whatever the voting public may choose to serve up is a part of it.

Actually holding public office is a more demanding business still, one that requires qualities such as being able to articulate a position to people not particularly inclined to agreement as well as keeping one's cool in the face of hostile crowds. However difficult and frustrating events on the campaign trail may at times be, you ain't seen nothing until you actually hold the office you seek and deal with people who think they own you because their taxes pay your salary. So when a candidate continually avoids the parts of a campaign he thinks he will find uncomfortable, it suggests that he may not actually be ready to face the heat of public office.

However, for those who may have been wondering what they might have heard at the candidate forums that Newsom skipped -- a list that includes events organized by the San Francisco Young Democrats; the League of Conservation Voters; the Harvey Milk Democratic Club; and the CAPA/Duboce Triangle, District 3, and Veterans Groups candidates nights -- his campaign has provided another option -- a series of issues forums at which the candidate will present his views in a setting unmarred by the contesting views of his opponents. Admission to these events costs \$25.

Does anyone else find it unseemly when a candidate whose only claim to incumbency rests on his standing in public opinion polls adopts this type of Rose Garden strategy?

(Tom Gallagher is president of the Bernal Heights Democratic Club, which has endorsed Tom Ammannio for mayor, but the opinions expressed in this article represent only his personal view.) ■

Planning Department Threatens Neighborhoods

By Palladio

The Planning Commission is considering limits on neighborhood access to planning hearings. Any development in our residential neighborhood could be made off-limits to protest if the planners get their way. Whether it is "tear-downs" or "monster homes" or any other developments that could harm the character of Bernal, the restrictions would not allow neighbors to band together and ask for a hearing at the Planning Commission.

Our unique neighborhood has many challenges for expansion or new building. The steep hills and narrow streets are part of our quality of life that requires close inspection of all building plans. Some of us remember projects that submitted plans with wrong or misleading surveys or measurements, or "alterations" that turned into demolitions, or driveways that suddenly included huge retaining walls over head high. These kind of errors happen, and neighbors would be denied a hearing in the interest of "efficiency."

The two Design Review Boards in Bernal Heights do a good job of informing neighbors and reflecting their views on development projects. But with restrictions on Discretionary Review, the Boards would lose their voice. The proposal would limit the chance for neighbors to be heard about the basic fabric and character of our community.

The Commission will have a hearing from 1:30 to 5:pm on Thursday, October 9th at Room 400, City Hall. ■

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Local Profile: Ramesh Lama

by Eugenie Marek

Ramesh Lama has the distinction among the Cortland Avenue Merchants of owning two restaurants: one of the oldest, Pizza Express, and also the newest, Little Nepal. In a recent interview, Ramesh explained how this came about.

He left his home in Nepal as a young man to study in the United States. While his grandfather brought some of the world to his family when he served in the British Army, Ramesh is the only one from his large family to travel so far. He says he was the "black sheep," usually "on the edge" looking for what else was possible. He laughingly says that his grandmother worried about him, even when he was right in front of her, because she wasn't sure what he might be up to.

Needing part time work while he studied, he got a job in a family-owned pizzeria. He caught on quickly, earning the "Employee of the Month" award, given out by the SF Pizza Trade. More importantly, over a 2 year period, there developed a relationship of mutual trust and respect between himself and the owner.

He still feels grateful for what happened next 17 years ago: his boss asked him to be partners in a new Cortland Avenue business, Pizza Express. A vacant storefront, which had been an ice cream parlor, changed into this long-running Bernal Heights business. Working with his partner, and in more recent years, as the sole owner, Ramesh has kept a steady, loyal group of customers.

Then, about 3 years ago, he began searching in his thoughts for something which would matter more to

him personally. He began dreaming about a Nepalese restaurant. When the shop next to Pizza Express closed 2 years ago, he began planning for a



second restaurant.

He almost dropped his dream several times. Transforming a 32 year-old pet shop into an eating establishment involved more permits and codes than he had imagined. He ran out of money three times, but decided to hold on to his dream. He thinks that these difficulties have left him more appreciative of the new restaurant.

Little Nepal is the only restaurant in the Bay Area serving Nepalese cuisine. Its chef, Prem Tamang, is a natural, first cooking with his mother while still in Nepal, then preparing meals for the more Western palates of Mt. Everest trekkers. He works by skill and

instinct rather than by written recipe. New dishes are tasted and discussed with his staff. While some of the dishes are "Indian style," most are distinctly from Nepal, being lighter in seasoning and less dependent on fats and oils.

The food is traditional, but the restaurant itself is original. The quiet mix of colors and finished wood interior result in a modern but serene atmosphere, Ramesh's idea of "something unique." He says that Peace Corps volunteers and trekkers who come for a meal remind him teasingly that restaurants like this don't exist in Nepal. Life is much too basic.

There is a hum of activity around the two restaurants. The staff is largely from family and members of the Nepal community, numbering about 1000 in San Francisco. Ramesh himself is pleased and modest at the same time. He is proud that his restaurant is popular, and thinks that his karma must be good to be receiving so much positive attention. Yet, he is inspired to remain humble, to remember Little Nepal opened just 5 months ago. He actively holds his attention to the details that will make his restaurant not only unique but also memorable for the people that eat there.

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GMC Group Spreads Healthy Message

By Brenda Perdue

This summer, staff in the youth department were concerned about what impacts the Unified School District budget cuts would have on San Francisco youth. At the Greater Mission Consortium, the staff put together a curriculum which involved leadership groups, recreational activities, field trips, leadership training, and presentations from other community networks such as drug and alcohol awareness, job readiness, violence prevention, etc. Fortunately our programming this summer was a great success. The youth effectively utilized the space we provide and were plugged into our services at the GMC and other community programs that were relevant to their lives. One of the programs conducted at the GMC is called Healthy Eating And Living (HEAL) which involves youth from various parts of San Francisco interested in being healthy and teaching others about their health. The focus of the group is to not only make our youth physically healthy, but also mentally and socially as well. The youth from the HEAL group did the research, and balanced our budget to implement several fun activities during the summer. The HEAL group created educational activities such as leadership training, a campaign called "Schools Not Jails," and contacted pertinent organizations to begin group training on drug & alcohol awareness, STD's, and rape and trauma. The recreational activities HEAL selected to go on were Waterworld waterpark, Great America theme park, picnics at the neighborhood parks, swimming, neighborhood walks, and planned a camping trip at Oakwood Lake Camping grounds at Manteca. One of our most memorable trips the HEAL group was fortunate to enjoy was

to Muir Woods for a nature walk. It was a hot day in San Francisco that day; however, Muir Woods had the trees to keep us cool and a breeze to make us smile. The youth were so excited about walking through the nature trails that they wanted to walk 10 miles to get to Stinson Beach for our healthy snack and meal. At first I thought time constraints would not allow us to walk the distance; nevertheless,



Youth from the HEAL program keep cool in Muir Woods on a recent trip.

we went to Stinson Beach and ate in the picnic area and then enjoyed the rest of our afternoon at the beach. We had a great time and have provided photos for others to enjoy our beautiful day. Some of the youth leaders from the HEAL group shared comments on either why they wanted to lead the group or why the group would be good for others. This is what one member had to say:

"This program is a good experience for us because we were fortunate to be given the opportunity to be in the Leadership Training Institute that gave us knowledge about our rights, and gave examples of the right and wrong things youth can get involved in. Also HEAL is just a lot of fun because I get to get together with my friends and do something positive that my parents approve of". Karla Egan ■

Dear Neighbors, THE 10TH ANNUAL HILLWIDE GARAGE SALE Was a HUGE Success!

With your help, we were able to raise nearly \$4,000 to benefit senior programs at the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center. Thank you for your unfailing support & commitment to helping us serve Seniors in our community.

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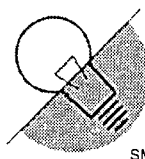
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Friends of Bernal Schools

News From Local Elementaries

Leonard Flynn

Leonard R. Flynn Elementary is off to a great start this year! Our school looks great due to the efforts of Rebuilding Together last spring to repaint playground games and the first floor hallway, and to the beautiful new mural on the Cesar Chavez side of the building that was created by last year's fifth graders and guest artist Josef Norris to honor Dolores Huerta. We also had a special treat in early September. Flynn was fortunate enough to get to see the Rolling Rainforest when it came through San Francisco on tour from Washington, D.C. Each class had a chance to tour the 53-foot semi that is equipped to look, feel and smell like a tropical rain forest inside, complete with dripping leaves, snakes in the trees, smells of vanilla and coffee, and a scientific work station. The children gained a better understanding of the ecosystem of the rain forest and the products it produces by really "experiencing" it.

We have more great activities for students and their families coming up in October, including Science Night with the Exploratorium, Fiesta Latina, and our traditional Halloween Parade. If you are interested in visiting our school, we will have tours starting in October on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 9:00, or by appointment. Please stop by! ■

Paul Revere

By Violeta García

Paul Revere Elementary School has started the year with great optimism. We want to say "thank you" to all our families and all our Bernal Heights Neighbors who have been helping us make Paul Revere a wonderful community.

One of the most important goals of our Principal and school staff is to strengthen our connections with the surrounding neighborhood. And with that in mind, we invite you participate in the Volunteer Program at Paul Revere.

We also invite all of the parents in Bernal Heights to consider Paul Revere as an option for their children. Our school offers a Spanish/English bilingual program, and we celebrate the cultural diversity of our student body. We also offer art and music programs, two after school programs and much more.

If you would like more information, feel free to call. There are many ways you can support our school: **695-5656** ■

Junipero Serra

By Sue Saunders

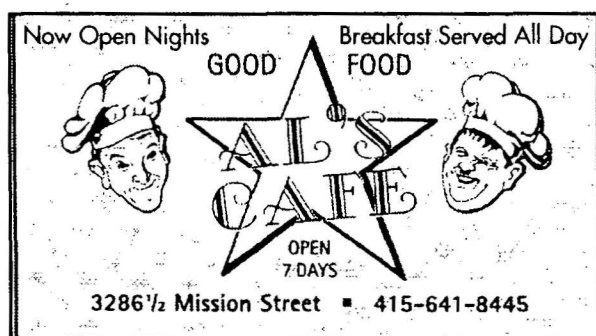
Thanks to the Friends of Bernal Schools, Junipero Serra Elementary School is off to a smooth start this 2003-2004 school year. Families assisted in passing out supplies and curriculum materials to the classrooms.

J. Serra staff was proud to hear from the CA Department of Education's Phase 1 Report that the school met its AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress). In October 2003 the API (Academic Performance Index) report will be released.

J. Serra students and community members are looking forward to a new play structure built on the school's playground. A collaborative grant with the San Francisco Conservation Corp came from the Mayor's Office of Community Development. Students will benefit from the exciting groundbreaking activities, observing the construction process, and finally playing on the play structure this school year.

J. Serra is involved in is the Latino Family Literacy Books Project. Families receive books on loan on a rotating basis. Also, starting in mid October are evening English classes taught by CBETS staff. All J. Serra classes are excited about going to Mission Science Workshop throughout the school year as a result of a grant from the San Francisco Education Fund.

Junipero Serra's After School Success Club will provide 90 students with homework help, enrichment games and activities. If you would like to volunteer for an hour or more a week please call Sue Saunders at 695-5685. Listening to a child read will make your day meaningful! ■



Looking for the Right School for your Child?

San Francisco Unified School District has many hidden gems you may not know about -- even right here in our own neighborhood!

The Public School Enrollment Fair on October 25th is a great opportunity to:

- Find out what each school in our district can offer your child;
- Understand the enrollment process; and
- Learn about the programs in every public school (elementary, middle, high) and Child Development Center (preschool and before/after school programs).

When: October 25th, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Where: Marina Middle School, 3500 Fillmore St. @Bay

For information about transportation, translation, and to register for childcare at the Fair, call **249-9293**.

"We're building better schools inside and out!"

Fairmount Elementary School

By Chris Loughran

Fairmount is excited to welcome our new principal, staff and our families back to school. The school will be kicking off the year with a carwash, rummage sale and bake sale on Saturday, October 4th. Bring by your dirty car, do some shopping, meet some neighbors and have a snack.

Fall school tours will be held every Tuesday 9-10am starting in October.

Fairmount offers 3 programs: General English, Two Way Spanish Immersion and Special Day/Inclusion. Come by and feel the new energy at the school.

The school will be hosting a Community work day on Sat. Oct 25th- National Make A Difference Day. Come meet your neighbors and lend a hand on a project or two. Call the school for details **695-5669**. ■



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Bernal Happenings

Bye-Bye, Café Abo!

by Ron Morgan
Whitney Gaunt and Edi Sartin sold off the espresso machines and the luchador posters, auctioned off the



Whitney Gaunt (right) and Edi Sartin (left) are closing the doors of funky Café Abo

Yoda memorabilia, and locked the door of the Café Abo for good on Saturday, September 13th, heading for parts unknown (either Italy and then Humboldt County, or Italy for a good long while). Café Abo opened eight years ago, and Whitney's hand-crafted, labor-intensive vegetarian culinary creations drew a devoted and appreciative coterie of customers, who also appreciated Whitney's eclectic musical selections and the genuinely down-home feel of the café. Inside the dark and cozy Abo, it seemed hard to believe you were a few feet from Mission St., but, then again, where else but Bernal Heights do places like Café Abo thrive. Bon voyage, Whitney and Edi!

Holly Park Update

By Eugenie Marek

"Not yet" is the phrase to sum up the situation for Holly Park. First, the capital renovation of the park has been slowly moving forward, but construction is not yet scheduled to begin. Per Judy

Mosqueda, project manager, the complete funding has now occurred, but details and sign-offs related to the construction plans are still to be done. This is frustrating given that the construction contract was awarded in June. Once begun, there is a nine month limit for the project's completion. Work will occur during the winter, with a total of 17 days "no work" allowance for bad weather. Please direct questions or comments to Judy Mosqueda, 558-4039.

The Rec & Park Department is within a couple of weeks of hiring a replacement for Holly Park's long-time gardener, Theresa Hill, who was first off work temporarily, and now permanently, for a disability. The park has been looking shabby, despite the efforts of workers coming from other parks to attend to it. We look forward to a new gardener to work along with the landscape renovations that will happen over the next year. We are sure Theresa will continue to visit the park.

We still await a decision, coming soon, about the street crossing safety grant to upgrade the streets around Junipero Serra School and Holly Park Circle. Nick Carr, Traffic Calming representative for DPT, says that our area is not likely to receive this grant this year. Attention has been focussed on the Buena Vista School area (24th /Potrero) where there was a student's death at a street corner earlier this year. He says that reapplying next year may bring us to the top of the list.

We also are awaiting the reforestation of the College Hill Reservoir, which is scheduled for this fall. There is a detailed plan for plantings of shrubs and trees that was created a year ago with community input. We have not yet heard when this will begin. Please address questions or comments to SFPUC Communications Department, 554-3297. The Friends of Holly Park will continue to look out for the above projects ,and will forward details in the next NBJ issue. Contact us at 826-0236.

No Depot Committee Launches www.NoDepot.org

By Ron Morgan

The No Depot Committee launches its new informational website, www.nodpot.org, on October 4th, 2003. The website is designed to act as a resource center for information on the continuing struggle with Home Depot, Inc. over development of the old Goodman Lumber/Whole Earth Access sites, and will eventually include background documents, links to new stories, and other goodies.



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WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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- Home Depot's anti-labor slant caused it to contracts because it didn't want to submit to f

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Join Us in Saying No Depot in San Francisco!

www.nodpot.org

The Home Depot project has been under environmental review since February 2001, and publication of the final version of the Environmental Impact Report seems unlikely before the New Year.

New Business for Bernal Babies

by Paul Welch
Bernal parents of infants and toddlers are singing the praises of Chloe's Closet, a new business on Cortland. Chloe's is a second hand store specializing in clothing and toys for children from birth to 6 years. The store takes items on consignment, and according to owner Molly Tyson has been already been doing a brisk business. She says she got the idea for the store just by looking around and seeing the need. "As a Bernal mom myself, the closest place to go for clothes for my child was Noe Valley," Tyson says. Her business sense was right on the mark, and a bevy of Bernal parents have been flocking to her store. "Bernal people are very loyal," she enthuses. "People here have been incredibly supportive." Chloe's is located at 451A Cortland. Closed Monday. Open Tuesday-Friday 11-7, Weekends 10-5.



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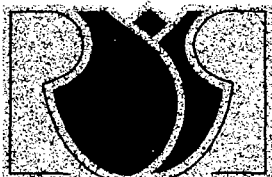
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Fiesta On the Hill

continued from Front Page electronic, highly improvisational music. Dave Berry crafts songs that speak to the issues of today in a traditional soulful sound. His performances are a mix of bluegrass, 70s folk rock and a little bit of alternative country. After 25 years of honing his craft on the sidelines of the music industry, Dave has released his debut album "At the Beach".

Our East stage will showcase a combination of performing artists, musicians and San Francisco Hip Hop and youth artists during the afternoon including: Loco Bloco, Gambizi & Jen-Ro, and the United Playaz.

The 15th Annual Bernal Heights Street Fair benefit the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center, a non-profit, community based organization serving seniors, youth and low income residents. The BHNC continues to build and maintain a healthy community through resident action and community organizing.

One way of supporting the BHNC and Fiesta on the Hill is by purchasing raffle tickets for a chance at fabulous prizes. This years Grand Prize is Trip to New York City with roundtrip airfare donated by JetBlue Airways. Other prizes include dinners at many of Bernal's best restaurants, a night out downtown with lodging at the Crowne Plaza Hotel at Union Square, a Day of Pampering package, and a home entertainment package. The tickets are available for a \$2 donation or 6 tickets for \$10.

To get to Fiesta take Muni (14, 24 or 67) to Cortland Avenue. Bicycle valet parking will be provided by the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition at the table on Cortland between Anderson and Ellsworth.

We still have many volunteer opportunities for Fiesta, for information on how to volunteer call Scott Cunningham at 415-970-0541. We have a few spaces left for vendors, for more information contact Neil Smith at 415-206-2140 ext 100. For other information call the Fiesta Hot Line at 415-206-2140 ext 210.

We especially want to thank all of our corporate sponsors showcased on the back page of the New Bernal Journal. The event would not take place without their generous support.

Thank you to the following donors* to our raffle: JetBlue Airways, Little Nepal, Jasmine Tea House, Lotus Garden, Blue Plate, Palatino's, Valentina's

Ristorante, 4 Star Video, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Tom's on Cortland, Carolyn Cohen CMT, Cutting Edge Hair Salon, Cortland Nails and Peter Rothblatt Massage and Bodywork. (* those confirmed as of 9/22/03)

Join your friends and neighbors at Fiesta 2003 and celebrate our special community. We'll see you there!

The Time is Now: A Call for Union Among Bernal's Mission Merchants

By Anna Ulbrich

"I would like for Mission Street to become more like Cortland," says Catalina Sanchez from Kids as she bites into her carne asada. Sitting at Taco Loco on a sweltering Friday afternoon, I enjoy listening to her tell the story of how she came to this neighborhood from Guanajuato, Mexico 23 years ago to open her hair salon. "It will take a long time, though, because people around here have very little time to spare." Indeed, the majority of merchants along Mission Street between Cesar Chavez and Randall work long and uninterrupted hours to make ends meet. So can anyone really afford to take the time to attend a community planning meeting? For Peter from the Fruteria Centroamericana, who works from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. and dedicates the remainder of his time to his family, activism has kept a warm seat on the back burner. Most agree that change is much needed, but also that it is too costly. Yet how much higher will the cost be when property value has increased to such a degree due to the imminent gentrification that merchants will no longer be able to afford the rent? Conversely, what is the long-term cost to individual merchants and to the community in general of failing to mobilize in order to make this a vibrant commercial corridor?

During the time of the Roman Empire, the hegemons considered marking the slaves with a special insignia so as to differentiate them from honorable citizens, since some of the slaves looked quite like Romans themselves. A cost-benefit analysis, however, led the Romans to conclude that marking the slaves would be a tactical mistake because it would reveal to everyone including the slaves the magnitude of their numbers, and consequently awaken them to their

potential power to unite and topple the system. While there is no overt outside force keeping the merchants divided, the similarity lies in the fact that many of the merchants on Mission Street are not aware that they have the same needs and aspirations nor of the power that uniting for change would generate.

Back at the hair salon, Catalina brings her sister Ophelia and a customer, Kathleen, into the discussion of what they would like to see change on Mission Street. "I would like for there to be a neighborhood watch to keep on eye out for sketchy characters and people who just throw their garbage on the sidewalk," says Kathleen. "I would also like to see more police presence." Ophelia adds that she wants to see a regulation that compels landlords to rent their spaces, as some of them have been vacant for over 15 years. Cleanliness, safety and empty lots are recurring themes with the merchants, issues that could easily be addressed if they joined forces.

With the South of Army Mission Merchants Association now defunct, there no longer exists a body to represent the needs of small businesses. However, like the Chinese word for crisis which includes characters for both danger and opportunity, now is the time to join forces and create a new association that will advocate for the needs of those whose voice has yet to be heard. Energy invested in the community today will blossom into a dynamic and prosperous community tomorrow.

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New Bernal Journal En Español!

Octubre/Noviembre 2003

El grupo músico TIERRA de Los Angeles encabeza el decimoquinto Festival Anual de Bernal Heights, "Fiesta on the Hill"

Todavía se necesitan voluntarios

Por Jack Chalmers, Neil Smith y Mauricio Vela

El día domingo, 19 de octubre, desde las 11:00 a.m. hasta las 6:00 p.m., la calle Cortland se convierte en un mercado de artesanías, un centro de recursos, un patio de recreo, un concierto y una pista de baile. La Fiesta on the Hill es el evento donde cada año en Bernal Heights se celebran música y artes, la comunidad y la diversidad.

La Fiesta es un evento organizado para las familias. Uno encuentra allí representaciones musicales y artísticas, juegos a bajo precio, comida étnica, bebidas sin alcohol y una área para niños cuyas actividades incluirán un zoológico, paseos en caballito, pintura para la cara y decoración de cal-

abazas. Vengan y disfruten con sus niños la panoplia de juegos, el arte con tiza y más sorpresas divertidas.

En los dos escenarios - al este y al oeste- habrá música en vivo y representaciones artísticas. Estamos agradecidos de que Tony Sandoval de KISS-FM 98.1 vaya a ser nuestro patrocinador de prensa y que vaya a presentar a nuestro grupo principal, Tierra. "Tierra nació en el 1971 durante el apogeo del movimiento Chicano cuando había conciencia política y social", dice Rudy Salas, el co-fundador y líder del grupo. "El orgullo racial es el elemento clave en nuestro estilo. También enfatizamos el orgullo cultural." No es fuera de lo común para Tierra llevar puesto un "zoot suit" para tocar la canción "Zoot Suit Boogie". Tierra es un grupo latino innovador que mezcla funk, Motown, rock y R & B. Gracias a canciones como "Are we in love?", "Gonna Find Her", y "Together", es el

primer grupo latino en tener 4 canciones en las clasificaciones nacionales. Trenta y dos años más tarde, se escucha todavía a Tierra en estaciones de radio por todo el sur-oeste, y se puede verlos en concierto en Albuquerque, Los Angeles y San José. Un grupo que es el secreto mejor guardado del Área de la Bahía, Safari, y que tiene sonidos venidos del distrito de la Misión en San Francisco, fusiona rock latino de los 70 con salsa nuy-orquina. Todas sus canciones son muy populares en las discotecas, y está garantizado que nos mantendrán bailando hasta el atardecer. Aphrodesia es un grupo Afro-funk de SF que combina elementos de música tradicional africana, cubana y brasileña con música funk y electrónica. Heathrow está compuesto por 2 ingleses y 2 norteamericanos, y su música es un verdadero sonido rock-alternativo transatlántico. Ted Czuk es un compositor de can-

ciones que toca el saxófono para música jazz, la guitarra para música rock, el bajo para música country y el piano para música blues. LaB RaTs es nuestro grupo local de Bernal Heights y que toca música muy electrónica y muy improvisada. Dave Berry escribe canciones que hablan de temas de hoy y que tienen un sonido tradicional y lleno de alma. Tras haber perfeccionado su arte durante 25 años en la periferia de la industria musical, acaba de sacar su primer álbum llamado "At the Beach".

En el escenario este, habrán músicos varios, representaciones artísticas, jóvenes músicos y hip hop, incluyendo a: Loco Bloco, Gambizi, Jen-Ro y los United Playaz.

El decimoquinto Festival Anual de Bernal Heights beneficia al Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center, una organización comunitaria que ayuda a los ancianos, los jóvenes y los residentes de bajos ingresos. El BHNC

Talleres de planificación para la comunidad de la Calle Mission

Por Mary Lucero-Dorst

Los días jueves, 2 de octubre y jueves, 20 de noviembre, los miembros de nuestra comunidad tendrán otra vez la oportunidad de traer sus opiniones e ideas creativas al Proceso de Planificación de la Comunidad. Los segundos y terceros Talleres de Planificación de la Comunidad tendrán lugar de 6:30-8:30 p.m. en la Iglesia San Antonio, en la calle Shotwell entre Precita y César Chavez. En el taller del 2 de octubre, la arquitecta Lisa Gelfand presentará un resumen de las ideas que formularon los participantes en el

primer Taller acerca de los cambios que quieren ver en la calle Mission entre César Chávez y Randall. Todas las personas que estarán presentes el 2 de octubre tendrán la oportunidad de comentar acerca de los resultados, de tal manera que sus ideas estarán incluidas en el proceso. En el tercer Taller de Planificación, la señora arquitecta Gelfand traerá el resultado final de todas las ideas dadas por la comunidad, lo cual será presentado al grupo para que se apruebe una propuesta final para la Comisión de Planificación de la ciudad.

Anteriormente este año, el BHNC

organizó una serie de reuniones comunitarias informales con varios representantes de la Ciudad y organizaciones que trabajan en nuestra parte de la calle Mission, para que la gente sepa el tipo de trabajo que hacen y maneras en las que se puede impactar sus proyectos en nuestro barrio. El primer Taller de Planificación del día 21 de agosto permitió a los participantes de visualizar nuevas posibilidades para la calle Mission. Las personas entonces formaron grupos para examinar la diferentes secciones de la calle Mission, y después cada grupo relató sus ideas al grupo entero.

El Proceso de Planificación es una manera para los residentes y otros miembros de la comunidad de describir los cambios que quieren ver en la calle

Mission entre César Chavez y Randall, en vez de dejar que los desarrollos futuros sean decididos únicamente por el mercado privado. Los cambios de uso de terreno pueden ser adoptados por la Comisión de Planificación y hechos ley por medio de una propuesta. Otros cambios como los cambios estéticos pueden ser implementados por medio de recomendaciones legislativas o por medio de trabajo con Departamentos de la Ciudad y grupos comunitarios.

Refrescos, cuidado de niños y traducciones serán disponibles en ambos Talleres de Planificación, así que marquenlos en sus calendarios y traigan sus ideas, su familia y sus vecinos a la Iglesia San Antonio! ■

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Si Usted quiere ayudar al BHNC y a la Fiesta on the Hill, puede comprar boletos para la rifa y tener la oportunidad de ganar fabulosos premios. Este año el gran premio es un viaje para Nueva York regalado por JetBlue Airways. Otros premios incluyen cenas en algunos de los mejores restaurantes de Bernal Heights, una noche de lujo en el Crowne Plaza Hotel en Union Square, un Día para Ser Mimado, y un premio de divertimiento casero. Se pueden comprar los boletos para \$2 cada uno o 6 boletos para \$10.

Para llegar a la Fiesta, se puede agarrar el Muni (14, 24 o 67) hasta la Cortland. La SF Bicycle Coalition pondrá a su disposición un parqueo especial para bicicletas en la Cortland entre la Anderson y la Ellsworth.

Tenemos muchas oportunidades para voluntariado, así que cualquiera persona interesada puede llamar a Scott Cunningham al 970-0541. Nos quedan unos pocos espacios para vendedores, por lo cual se puede llamar a Neil Smith al 206-2140 ext. 100. Para otros tipos de información, llamen al 206-2140 ext. 210.

Queremos agradecer a todos nuestros

patrocinadores corporativos quienes están listados en la última página del New Bernal Journal. Este evento no podría tener lugar sin su generoso apoyo.

Gracias a los siguientes donantes* por sus contribuciones a nuestra rifa: JetBlue Airways, Little Nepal, Jasmine Tea House, Lotus Garden, Blue Plate, Palatino's Valentina's Ristorante, 4 Star Video, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Tom's on

Cortland, Carolyn Cohen CMT, Cutting Edge Hair Salon, Cortland nails and Peter Rothblatt Massage and Bodywork. *(los que han confirmado hasta hoy 9/22/03).

Reúnen con sus amigos y su vecinos para nuestra Fiesta 2003 y celebren nuestra especial comunidad. Nos vemos allí! ■

La Escuela Primaria Paul Revere

Por Violeta García

La Escuela Primaria Paul Revere ha comenzado un año escolar con mucho optimismo.

Queremos dar las "gracias" a todas las familias de nuestra escuela y a todos los vecinos de Bernal Heights que nos han estado apoyando en hacer de Paul Revere una maravillosa comunidad.

Una de las metas más importantes de nuestra directora y de todo el personal de Paul Revere es fortalecer estos nexos de amistad entre la escuela y el vecindario, por lo que los invitamos a formar parte del Programa de Voluntarios de Paul Revere.

También, invitamos a todos los vecinos de Bernal Heights a que piensen en Paul Revere como una opción para sus hijos. Nuestra escuela cuenta con un programa bilingüe Inglés-Español, y celebramos la diversidad cultural entre nuestros estudiantes. También proveemos programas de arte y música. Dos programas de guardería para Después de la escuela, y mucho, mucho más.

Si requieren más información no duden en llamar, hay muchas formas en las que pueden apoyar a nuestra escuela: 695-5656 ■

¿Está buscando una escuela apropiada para su hijo/a?

El Distrito Escolar de San Francisco tiene muchas joyas escondidas que usted probablemente no sabe - están justo aquí en su vecindario!

La Feria Pública de matrícula escolar el 25 de octubre es una gran oportunidad para:

- Saber lo que cada escuela en el distrito le puede ofrecer a su hijo/a.
- Entender el proceso de matrícula escolar; y
- Aprender acerca de programas en cada escuela pública (escuela primaria, intermedia y secundaria) y Centro de Desarrollo Infantil (programas preescolar y para después de clases).

Cuando: Octubre 25, de 9:00 de la mañana a las 3:00 de la tarde

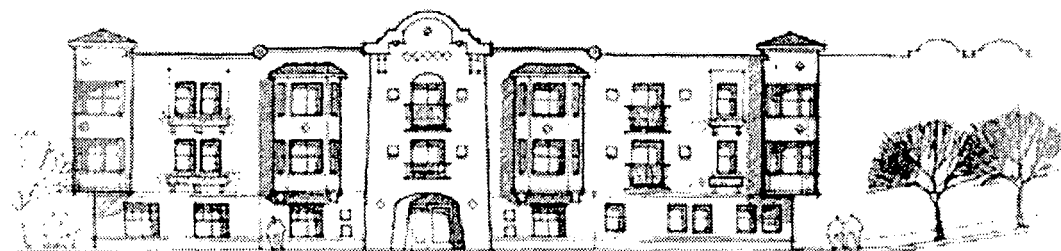
Donde: Escuela intermedia Marina, 3500 Calle Fillmore y Bay

Para información acerca del transporte, traducción y para solicitar cuidado de niños en la feria, llame al 249-9293.

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and Mission Housing Development Corporation



Major funding for development comes from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the City and County of San Francisco.

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Michio Yamaguchi, Owner's Representative

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El momento es ahora: una llamada para la unificación de los comerciantes de la calle Mission

Por Anna Ulbrich

"Me gustaría que la calle Mission sea más como la Cortland", dice Catalina Sanchez de la peluquería Kids Cuts mientras va comiendo un trozo de carne asada. Estamos sentadas en Taco Loco en un calentísimo viernes por la tarde, y me alegra escuchar a Catalina contar la historia de cómo llegó a este barrio hace más de veinte años desde Guanajuato, México. "Pero va a tardar mucho tiempo porque la gente aquí no tiene tiempo". Es verdad, la mayoría de los comerciantes de la calle Mission entre Cesar Chávez y Randall trabajan muchas horas sin interrupción para poder mantener a sus familias. Para Peter de la Frutería Centroamericana, quien trabaja de las 7:00 de la mañana hasta las 8:00 de la tarde y dedica a su familia el poco tiempo libre que le queda, el activismo no es la preocupación primaria. La mayoría están de acuerdo en que se necesitan hacer cambios, pero también que el costo de esto cambios está demasiado alto. Sin embargo, ¿cuánto más alto será el costo si dejamos que siga sin controles la construcción de condominios que van a hacer subir los alquileres en toda la calle? Es más, ¿cuál será el costo a largo plazo para los comerciantes y para la comunidad en general de no mobilizarse para revitalizar nuestra calle económicamente?

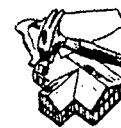
Déjenme prologar mi siguiente argumento con una analogía histórica: los Romanos, durante la edad del Imperio, contemplaron marcar a los esclavos con una insignia especial para poder diferenciarlos de los verdaderos ciudadanos, ya que muchos de los esclavos se parecían bastante a los Romanos. Pero, al estudiar más profundamente la cuestión, los Romanos decidieron que el marcar a los esclavos sería un error porque se darían cuenta del poder que tienen para unirse y volcar el sistema. Aunque en la calle Mission no hay fuerza exterior para mantener separados a los comerciantes, la situación se parece en que muchos de los comerciantes no saben que tienen deseos en común y que al unirse tendrían el poder de cambiar muchas cosas.

Otra vez en la peluquería, Catalina invita a su hermana Ofelia y a una cliente, Kathleen, a compartir sus ideas acerca de los cambios que quisieran ver en la calle Mission. "Me gustaría que se forme un grupo para vigilar a las personas peligrosas y a los que botan basura por el suelo", dice Kathleen. "También me gustaría ver más presencia de la policía". Ofelia añade que quiere ver una regulación que obliga a los dueños alquilar a sus locales, ya que algunos llevan más

de quince años vacíos. La limpieza, la seguridad y los locales vacíos constituyen temas de importancia para muchos comerciantes, y fácilmente se podrían hacer cambios si ellos unieran sus fuerzas.

Ahora que la "Asociación de los Comerciantes de la Calle Mission al Sur de la César Chavez" está difunta, ya no existe ningún cuerpo para representar a los pequeños negocios. Sin embargo, como lo implica la palabra china para decir "crisis", que está compuesta por los símbolos para "peligro" y "oportunidad", ahora es el momento de unir fuerzas para crear una nueva asociación que dará voz a los que no la tienen. Invertir energía en la comunidad hoy resultará en la comunidad dinámica y próspera de mañana. ■

Danny Brown



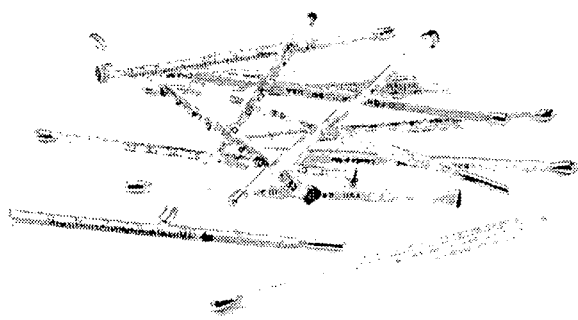
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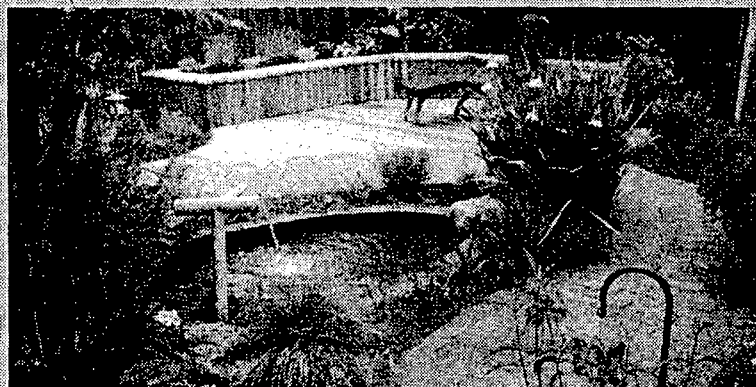


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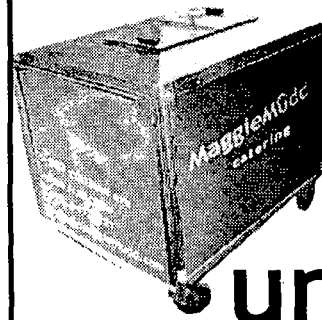
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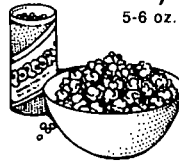
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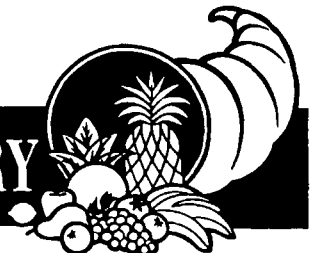
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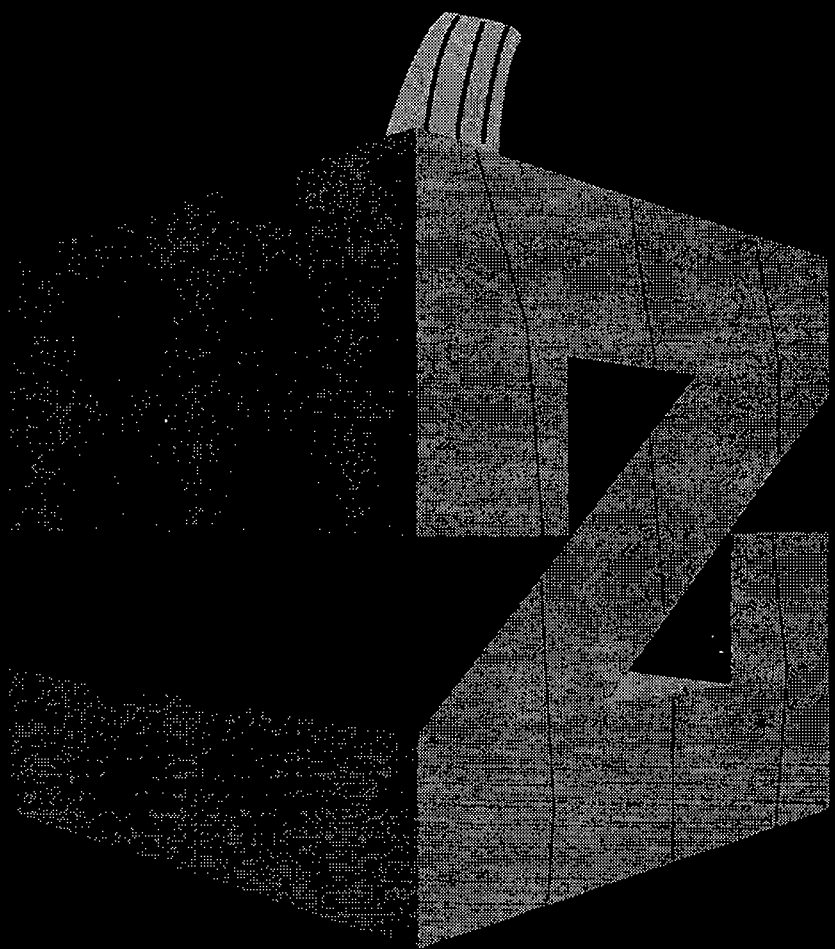
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Mission Street Community Planning Workshops #2 & #3

by Mary Lucero-Dorst

On Thursday, October 2nd and Thursday, November 20th community members will have more opportunities to bring their ideas and creative input to the Mission Street Community Planning process. The 2nd and 3rd Community Planning Workshops will be from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at St. Anthony's Parish Hall on Shotwell between Precita and César Chavez. On October 2nd Architect Lisa Gelfand will present a preliminary summary of what participants in the 1st Workshop said they would like to see change on our section of Mission Street between César Chavez and Randall Streets. Everyone there on October 2nd can comment on these results, making sure their ideas are included, so she can bring back a final summary for community review and approval at the 3rd Community Planning Workshop on Thursday, November 20.

Earlier this year, BHNC facilitated a series of community informational meetings with various city agencies and non-profits whose jurisdiction includes Mission Street to learn about what they do and how people can influence their work in our neighborhood. Lisa Gelfand's facilitation of the 1st Community Planning Workshop on August 21st enabled participants to visualize new possibilities for Mission Street. People at the workshop then broke into groups examining different sections of Mission, and each group reported their ideas back to the whole assembly.

The Mission Street Community Planning Process is a way for residents and other community members to describe what they want to see Mission Street between Chavez and Randall become, instead of leaving future development patterns exclusively to the whims of the private market. Land use changes can be incorporated into different kinds of zoning changes through presentation and adoption by the Planning

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Commission, while aesthetic or other changes can be implemented through policy recommendation and working with city agencies and local community groups.

Refreshments, child care, and translation will be provided at both Community Planning Workshops, so mark them on your calendar and bring your ideas, family and neighbors to St. Anthony's !■

What's New at the Library?

By Lisa Dunseth, Branch Manager
Bernal Heights Branch Library

BERNAL HEIGHTS BRANCH LIBRARY NEWS

Volunteer Jane Krivich has been diligently organizing our Bernal Journal archive. Thanks to Jane, we will soon have a complete archive of the Bernal Journal. Thanks also, to the Friends of the Library for our five historical photos which are now beautifully framed and hanging at the branch. Also, check out the latest Johanna Merriss aerial photo on display above the front desk.

CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS AT THE LIBRARY:

We have a number of lively children's programs scheduled this fall, which have been generously funded by the GABRIEL SHARING FUND. Magic Dan, October 2nd (Thursday) at 11 am. The Bubble Lady, November 6th (Thursday) at 11 am. Nick Barone Puppet Theatre, December 4th (Thursday) at 11 am.

WORD FOR WORD Performing Arts Company presents THE WONDERFUL STORY OF ZAAL: A PERSIAN LEGEND October 22nd, Wednesday 4 p.m. For All Ages. WORD FOR WORD will also offer a series of WORKSHOPS for 4th - 6th graders. October 22nd, (5:00 - 6:30 pm); 23rd (3:30-5:00 pm); & 25th (2:00 - 3:30 pm) Space is limited, please call 355-2810 to register.

STAFF RECOMMENDS:

Carol: AMADEUS (the movie). Skye: Yann Martel's LIFE OF PI; J. K. Rowling's HP5; Isabel Allende's CITY OF THE BEASTS. Sylvie: Thomas Sanchez's KING BONGO; Jacques Pepin's THE APPRENTICE: MY LIFE IN THE KITCHEN. Lisa: Gretel Ehrlich's THIS COLD HEAVEN; Sherman Alexie's TEN LITTLE INDIANS; Marjane Satrapi's PERSEPOLIS; and Mir Tamim Ansary's WEST OF KABUL, EAST OF NEW YORK.

All programs at the library are free and sponsored by the Friends and Foundation. The library is located at 500 Cortland Avenue. Call 355-2810 for more information.



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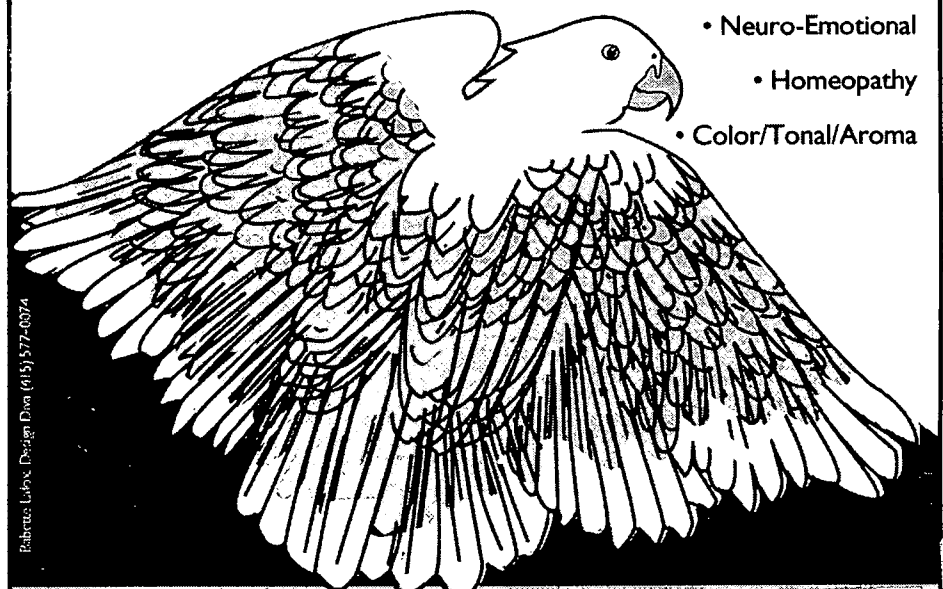
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continued from front page

On July 13, 1978 the City's Planning Commission approved most of this "Bernalian fancy," except for a few points, such as neighborhood-based rent control. It was called The Elsie Street Plan, and was a list of architectural standards to be enforced by a Neighborhood Building Review Board. This was "a revolutionary idea at the time," according to Barbara Bagot-Lopez, one of the organizers who had made the plan a reality. It was also from this plan that the Bernal Heights Community Foundation—the progenitor of the BHNC—was born. The new nonprofit focused mostly on affordable housing, organizing in the community and building a center for neighborhood activities and gatherings. It was also at that time that it began publishing *The Bernal Journal*, which became *The New Bernal Journal* in 1987, when the manager of a previous local paper, titled *The Bernal Journal*, challenged rights to the name.

The new organization's first building project was Holladay Avenue Homes, four condominiums sold at significantly below market value, with the stipulation that any future sales of the property be below market rate as well. In 1980 and '82 the City gave the new organization a total of \$500,000 for a neighborhood center building, and the BHCF joined together 513 and 515 Cortland Avenue into one structure (See photo on this paper's front page). With this, the Bernal Heights Neighborhood

Center as a place was born. Then—Mayor Dianne Feinstein presided at its opening on September 18, 1982. One of the first things that was done at the new building was transferring the Saint Kevin's Church seniors lunch program. Father James O'Malley and Sister Janet Simons had been looking for the right community organization to take over and expand the program. Soon the new building was buzzing with activity—community elders with volunteers serving them meals, neighbors meeting, and housing being planned. The Youth Services program began upstairs with a Ping-Pong table, then expanded to after-school activities and job counseling.

Planning started on a truly ambitious project in a joint venture with Bridge Housing; Coleridge Park Homes—forty-nine units of low-income senior housing. Beyond their importance for the people who came to live there, these apartments were significant because they were built on the roof of the Standard Brands Paint on Mission Street (now the Big Lots! store), and were the first sale of architectural air rights in the country. When finished, Coleridge was awarded a Fannie Mae Maxwell Award for Excellence in Affordable Housing. Since that time, BHNC has been nominated twice more for this honor, and in 2002 won a second for its Bernal Gateway Apartments, on the corner of Mission and Cesar Chavez. While work on Coleridge Park Homes continued, the Center was staffed by the people who developed the Elsie Street Plan and fought to get funding to build the Center and who brought together hundreds of neighbors each year to go

down to City Hall at budget time and keep funds flowing for their work. Barbara Bagot-Lopez describes the Center's staffing like this:

Buck [Bagot, Barbara's brother, who will be honored at this year's 25th Anniversary party] and Roger [Borgenicht] became co-directors of the new organization; Jeanne [Hamer] the first board President, and Margaret [Randolph] the Treasurer; other charter Board members included Sedalia [Brown], Charlene [Martinez], Miley and Sheila Holman, Penny Polatsch, Mara Liaison, and Audrey O'Gilvie. Sister Janet and Ann Kyle led a strong Neighborhood Center committee. Brian McCaffrey donated his time as our legal counsel. Jeanne, Margaret, and

Charlene have all since passed on, but the legacy of their leadership and guts still inspires Bernal activism to this day.

In 1987, these organizers came up with a new way to involve community members: the first neighborhood Congress. As it is still, this was an event where residents came to the Center to elect Board members and ratify the coming year's work plan. In 1989, as Coleridge Park Homes was completed, BHNC hired Helen Helfer as Executive Director and Mauricio Vela, who had spent six months on the Board, to oversee the social service and community organizing aspects of the organization's work.

As people worked to make affordable and livable

continued on page 21

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Money from the Sun

By Andrew Fowler

Rabbi Allen Bennett of Nevada Street used to pay PG&E an average of \$70 each month for electricity. In May of this year, Rabbi Bennett installed a solar power system that cost him barely any money and almost completely eliminated his electric bill.

"I wanted to go solar so that I would be less dependent on fossil fuels whose costs were continuing to rise with no letup in sight," said Bennett. "By generating my own power, I'll avoid continually rising power costs, while at the same time using renewable energy - it's a winning combination all the way around."

Bennett has twenty-eight BPSolar photovoltaic modules on his roof, each measuring approximately five feet by two feet, which are invisible from the

street. Photovoltaic cells ("PV": photo = light, voltaic = electricity) convert sunlight directly into electricity. The modules, when exposed to sunlight, generate direct current (DC). This current is transmitted via wire to an "inverter," which converts DC to alternating current, or AC, which is the same type of electricity that is used when we plug an appliance into an ordinary electrical outlet.

Unlike survivalists or people living "off grid" in remote places, Bennett is still connected to the utility grid, and for good reason. Like most, this PV system was designed to purposefully generate excess power. At times, Bennett's electric meter spins backwards when he's generating more power than he needs. PG&E gives him a credit for this power to be used against future electricity purchases, virtually eliminating his electric bill.

PG&E has been an active sponsor of renewable energy efforts. "We're pleased to help customers address their energy needs by supporting residential PV and various legislative bills that promote PV systems," said PG&E spokesperson Paul Moreno. From 2000 to 2002, the number of new PV customers tripled each year, and now totals about 3,000.

Sunlight Electric, the San Francisco-based company that designed Rabbi Bennett's system, confirms that Bennett is among a growing group of solar friendly Bay Area residents. "We're seeing a strong growth in interest due to concerns about the environment and about energy security," said Rob Erlichman, President of Sunlight Electric, which has residential and commercial customers in Bernal Heights, Potrero Hill, Noe Valley, the Haight, Laurel Heights, and the Marina. "When homeowners and owner-occupied busi-

nesses learn they can do this with no up-front costs, it changes the equation for them. No longer are they penalized for doing something socially responsible. With California rebates and tax incentives as they are, it actually pays to do it."

"With the rebates, the cost was about half of what it would have been without them," said Rabbi Bennett.

However, those rebates and tax incentives are quickly running out due to growing demand. According to the California Energy Commission, as of June 2003, \$92 million of the \$125 million California allocated for solar rebates for the next five years has already been committed. In addition, California's Solar Tax credit, which currently provides for a credit in the amount of 15 percent of the cost of a PV system net of rebates, will be reduced to 7.5 percent in 2004.

Ready... Set... GROW

The tradition of topping off began more than 1,000 years ago in Scandinavia. The completion of a building's skeleton was celebrated with the placing of a tree atop the new structure.

Saturday, October 18
everyone is invited to the
New de Young Museum
Topping Off

Beginning at noon

FAMILY FAIR PLACE Art-making projects for children: origami, Mrs. Grossman's sticker art; poetry writing, family portraits by Exquisite Corpse Portraits; wood sculpture demo, Geoffrey Nwogu; create your own collage, Cynthia Tom; make your own fresco tile, Jose Galindo; design a canvas square for the new de Young mural, Mural Exchange Project; live model sketching, Rick Rodrigues, City College museum drawing class.

CURATORIAL CHAT ROOM There's almost nothing curators like to do more than talk about art. Chat with them about everything from housekeeping—cleaning and readying the art for presentation—to where does everything go—your long-time favorites and new acquisitions.

MUSIC-OF COURSE Gee Yung Lion Dancers; SF Lesbian/Gay Freedom Band; SF Opera Center; John Santos and the Machete Ensemble; surprise guest performances; and also music to your ears, San Francisco Poet Laureate Deborah Major.

ACQUISITIONS Designer previews from the new de Young Store and items for your personal collection.

MODEL TENT See samples of the new building materials, take a photo tour through the new de Young to date.

2 p.m.

KUDOS & COMMENTS This is the opportunity to thank the many who have contributed to the new de Young.

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Gavin Newsom has shown what we can accomplish when we bring San Franciscans together. Newsom helped unite leaders from every neighborhood to pass the recent neighborhood parks bond. He was instrumental in bringing labor, management and riders' groups together to pass fundamental MUNI reform. And Newsom is working to unite San Franciscans around real solutions to the homeless crisis.

Newsom has detailed plans to create high wage jobs for San Franciscans. He is working to bring the city and schools together so that every child has access to a high quality education. He is fighting for a pioneering affordable housing plan that will help provide new homes for working families. And Newsom is "getting under the hood" of city government to make it work more efficiently for everyone.

On November 4, please join with Senator Dianne Feinstein, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, State Senator Jackie Speier, Rescue MUNI, the San Francisco Firefighters and neighbors from every corner of San Francisco in support of Gavin Newsom for Mayor.

**Yes! I support Gavin Newsom's plan
for neighborhood change!**

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I WILL STOP THE VICTIMIZATION AND GOUGING OF THE CITIZENS by an overspending out of control city government. Why should we pay more for MUNI, parking meters/tickets, etc. in order to support 4,000 USELESS POLITICAL APPOINTEES?

I WILL CUT THE REGULATIONS THAT MAKES HOUSING SO EXPENSIVE! The City wants more renters than homeowners, so regulations are designed to keep people renting and to restrict affordable housing.

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Angela Alioto

A Mayor for All San Francisco

To My Friends in Bernal Heights

Did you know ...

Preserve Our Neighborhoods

Bernal Heights is a vital, unique, and historical San Francisco neighborhood. But the character of our neighborhoods and business districts may change forever if City Planning is successful in gaining approval of its draft Housing Element. The Housing Element proposes to:

- Build higher density housing on top of commercial storefronts
- Eliminate or reduce parking space requirements for new housing
- Allow secondary "in-law" units to be built in garages and basements
- Encourage smaller housing units and denser developments

I oppose this plan for Bernal Heights and for other established San Francisco neighborhoods. If you like Bernal Heights the way it is now, join me in opposing the Housing Element. San Francisco needs more new housing, particularly for working families, but it is not necessary to destroy our neighborhoods to do it. My housing plan is posted on my website: angela4mayor.com.

Property Taxes and Budget Priorities

Are your tax dollars working for the people of Bernal Heights? Good schools, safe streets, clean sidewalks, good libraries and parks? I get calls from Bernal Heights supporters every day who tell me that crimes are up, neighborhood stores are being robbed in broad daylight, and police response falls short.

With a \$5 billion dollar budget, I think San Francisco can do better, and not by raising your property taxes. We have too many city bureaucrats making over \$100,000 a year, (close to 3,000). There are too many sweetheart contracts costing city taxpayers millions of dollars. I believe City Hall should be for the people's business, not parties, and by moving city government back into City Hall we can save millions in office leases. I will get rid of costly employment perks, like the hundreds of City cars issued for personal, not city business use, as well as costly related parking expenses.

Immediately upon taking office I will commence a top to bottom financial and operational audit of every city department. I will use these cost savings to give taxpayers of Bernal Heights the services you deserve.

All My Best,

Angela

Angela Alioto is a candidate for Mayor of San Francisco. She has the experience and qualifications for the job, serving eight years on the Board of Supervisors, two years as President.

For the past six years, Angela has worked outside of government as a successful civil rights trial attorney, winning landmark discrimination cases against large corporations on behalf of individuals who have been wronged due to illness or racial prejudice. Angela is a small business person, managing her own law firm in North Beach employing 12 people.

Angela was born and raised in San Francisco and has lived here all of her life. Her father was Mayor Joseph L. Alioto. She is the mother of four children, and the grandmother of two. She knows first-hand what is important to San Francisco families.

TO VOLUNTEER CALL 434-2100

Angela4Mayor.com

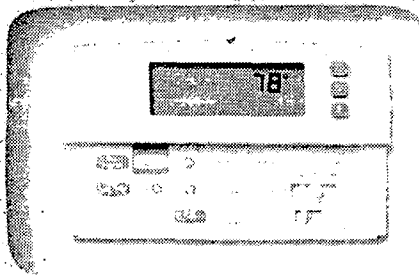
Come and Enjoy the 15th Annual Fiesta On the Hill!

When: Sunday, October 19th, 11 a.m. till 6 p.m.

Where: Cortland Ave Between Bocana and Gates

Great Music, Great Food, Great Booths, Great Time!

Lowering air conditioning costs this summer is going to take the right people to pull a few strings.



If everyone who uses central air conditioning pulled the cords to lower their shades, or installed awnings or sun screens to keep the heat out during the day, we could actually save enough energy to keep an entire power plant from being built.

SAVE ENERGY – NO COST, NO SWEAT

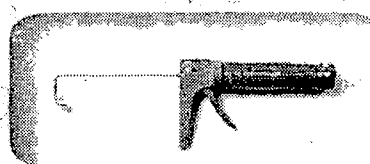
You're probably operating your air conditioner in the low 70s. But did you know that you could save 10-20% on your cooling costs if you set your thermostat at 78 degrees (health permitting) when you're home? And here's another tip: Try using ceiling or portable fans to help make up the difference. Ceiling fans can actually make you feel 7 degrees cooler, compared to non-moving air. It's also important to clean or replace filters regularly and inspect them monthly during the summer.

LOW-COST WAYS TO KEEP YOUR COOL

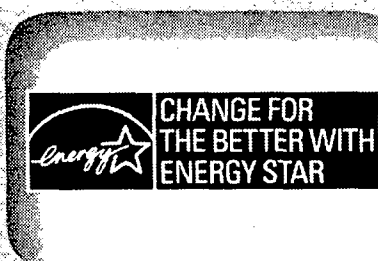
Install shades, awnings and sun screens on windows that face east, south and/or west to block heat. This keeps your home cooler, so your air conditioner doesn't have to work as hard, and can save up to 5% of your monthly cooling energy usage. Many parts of California have cool nights, even in the heat of summer. Night ventilation cooling works well and can be enhanced with a whole-house fan. Install an ENERGY STAR® labeled programmable thermostat to prevent unnecessary cooling, and save 3-5% of your monthly energy usage. Using a room fan in place of air conditioning can save up to 5% of your monthly cooling costs.

COOL INVESTMENTS IN ENERGY EFFICIENCY

If your air conditioner is 10 years old or older, replacing it with an ENERGY STAR® model can save up to 20% of your monthly cooling costs. Get air conditioning ducts tested for air leakage. Leaking ducts can reduce the efficiency of your cooling system 25-30%.



Change out old windows with new high-efficiency ones. High-performance windows can reduce cooling costs by up to 15%.



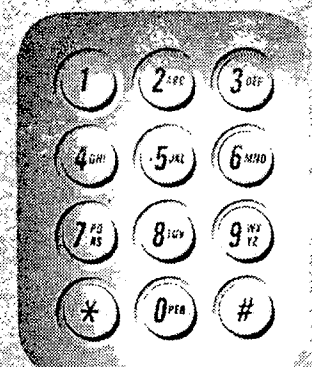
SAVE ENERGY, SAVE MONEY – WE WANT TO HELP YOU MANAGE YOUR GAS USE THIS WINTER

The federal government is predicting high natural gas prices this winter. While we are doing all we can to minimize the impact this will have on your winter utility bill, it's important to know what to do to lower energy costs. You can prepare by installing a programmable thermostat that can turn your furnace on and off only when you need it. Also, simply installing an energy-saving showerhead in your home will reduce hot water use and water costs by 10-16% without affecting your comfort. In the

meantime, know that we will do everything we can to purchase and store natural gas at the best price available, and pass that along to you at no extra charge. You may be eligible for additional assistance in managing your Pacific Gas and Electric Company

bill. For information about the CARE, REACH, HEAP and PG&E Energy Partners programs or the Balanced Payment Plan, call 1-800-PGE-5000.

For more advice on conserving energy and simple, everyday tips, visit www.pge.com.



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Thanks Richard Calderon

for your great work and your generous donation of time
and labor to the renovation the BHNC!

Richard (pictured left) can be reached at: R C Windows & Doors Specialists
811 San Jose Ave, San Francisco, 94110
Call for a free estimate: 415-401-8376

Become a member of the Northwest Bernal Heights Design Review Board.

The "Elsie Street Plan," developed by concerned neighborhood activists in 1978, and the Bernal Heights Special Use District regulations subsequently passed by the Board of Supervisors in 1991 are tools that help preserve and promote the special features of our neighborhood. These include smaller-scale homes on smaller lots, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, access to sunlight and breezes, adequate parking, and "compatibility" with existing homes.

The Northwest Bernal Heights Design Review Board meets twice a month to review plans for new construction and remodeling to make sure they are compatible with San Francisco Planning Code and the Bernal Heights Special Use District. (We review plans for Northwest Bernal only; the East Slope Neighbor Design Review Board reviews plans on the eastern side of the hill.) These meetings give all residents -- owners, renters, adjacent neighbors, an opportunity to discuss the impacts of proposed construction or remodeling. In most cases, this process results in more sensitive development and resolution of any potential disputes with neighbors. Based on these meetings, the Design Review Board makes a recommendation to the Planning Department to approve or turn down plans.

Each year, we recruit new members to serve on this volunteer board. All residents of Northwest Bernal are encouraged to apply -- both renters and homeowners. You do not need to have special knowledge of the development process, but you must be interested in learning about the design regulations that apply to our neighborhood and be willing to attend bi-monthly meetings. And you must live within the boundaries of Northwest Bernal. This area is currently understood as bounded by Cesar Chavez, Coleridge, Cortland, Bonview, Stoneman and Coso.

An election will be held by the Northwest Bernal Alliance at their November meeting. If you are interested, please contact Bob Fisher at 415-285-2750 for more information and an application.

Thinking of Buying or Selling in Bernal Heights? Call Issa first!

- Call me for a free consultation on how to show your home at its best. Put my design know-how to work for you.

- First time buyers tell me I'm easy to talk to and appreciate my commitment.

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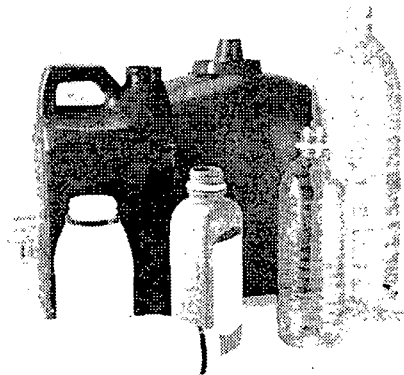
Issa Cuadra
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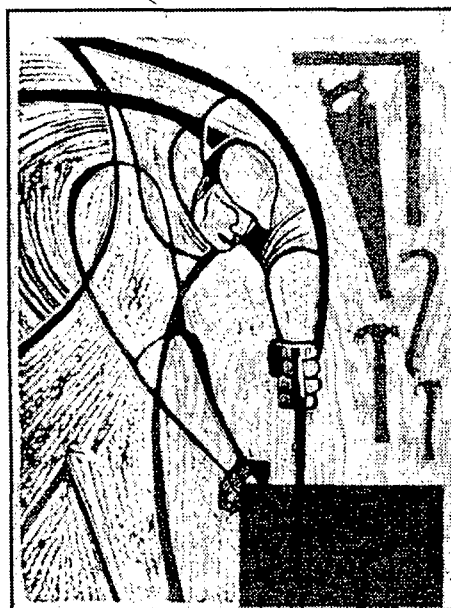
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AT WORK: THE ART OF CALIFORNIA LABOR

A tribute to California's turbulent 20th century labor movement



Emmy Lou Packard, Carpenter, c. 1950, woodcut, 16" x 12"

Victor Arnautoff
Pele deLappe
Maynard Dixon
Rupert Garcia
Emmanuel Joseph
Dorothea Lange
Hung Liu
Emmy Lou Packard
Diego Rivera
Patricia Rodriguez
Allan Sekula
and others

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678 Mission St. at Third, SF

SFSU Fine Arts Gallery

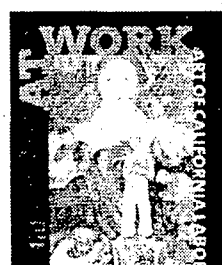
September 2 - October 11, 2003
1600 Holloway Ave. (on campus), SF

www.californiahistoricalsociety.org

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"Laboring for Coverage: Unions & the Media"
panel discussion at SF Main Library • 415 557-4277

Tuesday, 10/14 • 7:30 PM
Slide show with Mark Dean Johnson,
editor of *At Work: The Art of California Labor* (Heyday Books)
Modern Times Books, 888 Valencia St. / 415 282-9246



Available from Heyday Books
At Work: The Art of California Labor
176 pages, 108 color plates (\$35)
Edited by Mark Dean Johnson

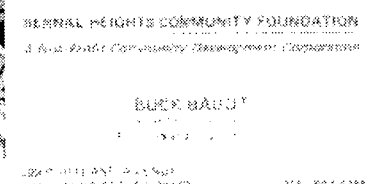
Congratulations and thank you, Buck, for over 25 years of hell-raisin', dedication, and tenacity through grassroots organizing in your hometown of Bernal Heights. With love and appreciation from your family, friends, and neighbors.



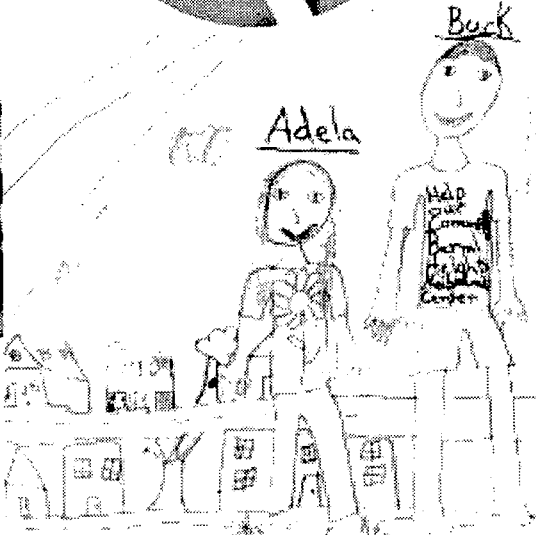
On this 25th anniversary of the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center, we recognize the beauty and strength of the BHNC are the people who have given of themselves to the community of keeping Bernal Heights ethnically diverse. Each of these people has devoted a period of their lives, and then of course moved on to other endeavors. But you, Buck, are the one person who has never strayed from his post of providing vision, guidance, advocacy and inspiration to the organization and the neighborhood.



A man of VISION. With Jim Riggs & Dianne Feinstein, you led the innovative effort to negotiate the special "air rights" development over retail space for the Coleridge Park Homes, where 49 seniors live today. You envisioned Market Heights above the Farmers' Market years before it broke ground—now 46 families live there. Years before it became a reality, you stood at the corner of Cesar Chavez and Mission, pointing to the used car dealership and envisioning the "Bernal Gateway" affordable family apartments, where 55 families live today.



You've been traveling nationwide doing grassroots organizing in congressional districts to win a billion dollars from Congress for the preservation of affordable housing developments for low income people and to help homeless people off the streets and into real homes. But you've also managed to stay involved in key Bernal organizing efforts.



BHNC at 25 continued from page 14

homes for members of the community, it quickly became clear that those who didn't have a roof over their heads were not the only ones in need. The Center began seeing people who owned their property but were in a downward spiral, unable to afford to keep it up, unwilling or unable to sell. In the late '80s, BHNC found a means of helping these homeowners. The City offered to partner with it in administering two programs: the Community Housing Rehabilitation Program (CHRP), which offers low-interest loans-both deferred payment and amortized-for the correction of Housing Code problems, and the Code Enforcement Rehabilitation Fund (CERF), offering interest-free and deferred hardship loans. Over the years, these rehabilitation programs have grown to be a natural complement to the Center's building of houses.

BHNC grew as a force in the community, but significant parts of the neighborhood were still deteriorating. Both Holly Park and the Holly Court public housing were open drug markets. On Cortland Avenue-pocked with empty storefronts and scribbled with graffiti-the Bank of America was threatening to leave and the Public Library was in an ongoing limbo, requiring steady organizing to get the City to keep its doors open. BHNC convinced the SFPD to increase their presence in the Holly Park area, scaring away the consumers and drying up the demand for drugs. The dealers moved on (In the wake of this, Holly Court has become one of the most desirable public housing developments in the city.) Cortland was a more complex issue, and needed to be addressed on both neighborhood revitalization and on community organizing fronts. Bank managers and administrators at corporate headquarters were talked to, and it was agreed that the branch would stay if the Center could get a pledge of 1,000 new accounts. Organizers went throughout the neighborhood collecting pledges from area businesses and residents. At the same time, seniors from the Senior Services program kept an informational picket outside the bank's doors, explaining to passers-by the history of their families contribution to the construction of the branch and the hardships for them if the bank left the Hill; they collected commitments to open an account and signatures on a petition. The BofA is still there today.

Negotiations began with a Potrero Hill merchant, Good Life Groceries, to open a second branch in Bernal, buying out the lease of another grocer that was doing more harm than good. The battles to keep the Library open were repeated and heated. In one round, then-Mayor Agnos came for a press conference on the building's steps to announce its closing, and was met by 350 residents who changed his tune before he got back into his car. In another, then-Mayor Jordan was confronted with a five-foot tall library card stamped "VOID," carried by Bernal youngsters. In 1994, with the passage of Proposition E guaranteeing library hours as a trade-off to get the new Main Library built, funding for the branch was solidified and the worries went away. With these three anchor establishments in place, Cortland began its growth into the teeming business corridor that it is today.

A further part Cortland Avenue's rebirth was BHNC's decision to bring back the Bernal Fair. The original had been staged in Precita Park, or "Precita Green" as it once was called, and had attracted crowds upward of 10,000, rivaling Fiesta on the Hill's numbers today. Then there had been a Bernal Folks (Yes, that's "folks") Festival on Cortland Avenue for a few years in the early '80s. In 1989, eleven years after BHNC's founding, the first Cortland Avenue Fair was held, not on Cortland Avenue, but on the playground behind the Bernal Library. So was the second and third. It wasn't until 1995 that Fiesta on the Hill began to take up the space and scale that it does today on the Avenue.

1991 and 1992 were banner years for BHNC's social services component. In '91, the Senior Services program staff realized they were only reaching those who were healthy and mobile enough to get to the

Center. In a survey of seniors called the Community Needs Assessment, a significant part of the area's elders were found to be frail with multiple disabilities, and sitting in their homes, unable to access services. With this fact in mind BHNC began its Bernal Elder Support Team, or BEST. Starting out with a single Elder Support Director, Julia Mills and Elder Support Assistant Ruth Morales the program eventually added volunteers and the staff time to manage them, then dedicated and professional Social Workers to address the clients' needs, and finally the SFSU Nurse Intern program that works with elders today, completing the comprehensive "toolbox" for frail, homebound and at-risk seniors. In the late '90s "BEST" was changed to "Neighborhood Elder Support Team," or "NEST" in order to more accurately represent the breadth of its work.

Then in 1992, gang-related violence began simultaneously in Precita Park, the Alemany Housing Development and the Bernal Playground. BHNC staff started a grassroots lobbying campaign, filling then-Mayor Jordan's office with 300 neighbors, telling the City it had to take action. Meanwhile, parents and older ex-gang members went through the streets, parks, parking lots, drug houses, and outside of local schools, meeting kids where they were, talking with them, offering them alternatives to violence. BHNC succeeded in cooling down what had become an extremely volatile situation. It was from this that the

Center's Gang Prevention program grew, and eventually its recognized United Playaz youth program. Also in 1991, planning on BHNC's largest building project to date began: Market Heights Apartments (above the Farmer's Market). But with size came controversy. As planning started, individuals opposing it put its future on the ballot. While construction stalled, community members went into high gear, talking to people, getting the reality of the issue out. The ballot measure lost 69% to 31%, and Market Heights Apartments was dedicated in 1996.

It was in 1992 as well that BHNC began the more complicated process-but one with a high social payoff-of creating "special needs" housing, or housing created for individuals and families with particular challenges, such as being HIV/AIDS positive, or homeless, or recovering from addiction. This required coalition building with other agencies that specialized in supporting people in these straits. As the Executive Director at the time, Helen Helfer, put it, special needs housing "was, and continues to be, a strong partnership between the Center's Housing Department, which provides the technical purchasing and rehabilitation work, and carefully selected non-profit agencies who provide key ongoing support services to the residents." Today, eight of the BHNC's 13 housing developments provide special needs services.

In 1993, as a result of increased bloodshed and rising

continued on page 22

Yes!

I want to help Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center continue to serve my community!

☐ \$15-49 Regular Membership

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☐ \$100-249 Neighborhood Center Friend

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☐ \$1000 Neighborhood Center Sponsor

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My employer has a matching gift program. A corporate matching form is enclosed.

Name of employer

I am interested in learning about volunteer opportunities.

I am interested in learning about Planned Giving opportunities.

I have remembered the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center in my will.

Other Ways You Can Help!

■ Make a United Way Donor Choice gift. Just fill in BHNC's code #928683 on the United Way pledge form.

■ For federal workers, the Combined Federal Campaign is the program through which you designate your United Way gift.

■ Multiply your gift with a matching contribution from your employer.

■ Donate used items to our thrift store, Gifts on the Hill, 513 Cortland Ave., San Francisco, CA 94110

■ Donate resale items to Community Thrift Store, Valencia between 17th and 18th Streets, and designate BHNC (acct# 243) as the beneficiary.

■ When you shop at Cole Hardware, Mission and 29th Street, tell them you want BHNC (acct# 515) to get 10% from your purchase.

■ Consider including the BHNC in your estate planning. Call (415) 206-2140, ex. 161 to discuss how.

needs of the community's young people, BHNC's Youth Services joined together with five other agencies (Enterprise High School for Youth, Mission Neighborhood Centers, Mission YMCA, RAP or Real Alternatives Program and MCLD or Mission Community Legal Defense) to form the Greater Mission Consortium, or GMC. The new coalition's goal was to simplify access to services for kids and be able to cross over the lines of bureaucracy that sometimes kept them out on the streets. Over the years, members have come and gone—RAP and MCLD no longer exists, and Paul Revere Elementary was briefly a member. Today the GMC is made up of MYMCA, Mission Neighborhood Centers/Precita Center, La Raza Centro Legal and Enterprise for High School Students. 1995 saw planning and design work begin for what became the Bernal Gateway Apartments, fifty-five family units, to be built at the corner of Mission and Cesar Chavez Streets. The development was envisioned on the "special needs" model, providing on-site services that would be important for families struggling to support themselves, but without the narrow focus on particular issues. The site was finally bought in 1997, in the wake of a community land-use debate when a Lucky Store wanted to share the same parcel. In addition to apartments, the completed complex also has an on-site employment training, placement and retention center and childcare, both provided through the Family School, and case management, activities and information referral provided by Lutheran Social Services, and a Youth Center run by both BHNC and LSS staff.

Today, BHNC has a number of projects underway, although some began years ago. One of the most dramatic, and in a very different way nearly as visible as the Bernal Gateway Apartments, has been BHNC's efforts around Bayshore Boulevard on Bernal Hill's eastern border. In 2000, the

Whole Earth Access had been closed for some time, and Goodman's Lumber Bayshore Boulevard next to it closed down suddenly and surprisingly. BHNC's Affordable Housing department had been mulling the possibility of doing some kind of development in Bayview for some time, and had been having friendly conversation with members of the Bayview Planning Area Committee or PAC, the SF Redevelopment Agency's advisory panel from the Bayview/Hunter's Point neighborhood on this subject. When Goodman's went south, fifty people from both communities came together at St. Anthony's Church for a planning and development workshop, facilitated by architect and urban planner, Michael Pyatok, to begin creating a community-based plan. What grew out of that was a vision of a mixed-use environment, with housing and small businesses, and a variety of possibilities such as a youth center, gardens, a high school or a health center.

But while this was going on, the PAC had received overtures from The Home Depot, Inc., based out of Atlanta Georgia. THD, Inc. wanted to build its biggest store on the West Coast (150,000 square feet) on the site and, with the promise of jobs and dollars flowing into a community that needed them, PAC was wooed to throw their support behind the chain and won from the City a plan maintaining the Bayshore corridor and surrounding streets as an IPZ, or Industrial Protection Zone, not allowing for any housing on the strip. Initially, the Planning Department gave THD, Inc. a green light, claiming that it would have little environmental impact. BHNC quickly responded to enormous community concern that the megastore would not be responsive to local values, would bring jobs with salaries and benefits too low to support a family (especially in SF's economic environment), would siphon money out of the neighborhoods and the City, and that it would tie up traffic and

create a significant negative impact on air that was already badly effected by freeways and antiquated power plants.

The Center helped people appeal the Planning Department's decision, and asked the Department to require THD, Inc. to submit a full Environmental Impact Report (EIR). During the course of getting the EIR, BHNC sponsored a town-hall meeting that was attended by 300-plus neighbors, representatives from five Board of Supervisors' offices and someone from the Mayor's office. It was during this time as well that Mayor Brown announced at a BHNC Community Congress that he believed a Home Depot store did not belong in San Francisco. The EIR appeal was successful, and in February 2002, the Planning Department announced the project would be subject to a full review under the California Environmental Quality Act. At the same time, Supervisor Ammiano introduced legislation to bring all retail developments over 50,000 square feet under the Conditional Use Authorization process, which ensures community input and places enforceable community requirements on developers. Although this legislation won a seven-to-four vote majority at the Board of Supervisors, the Big Box legislation was vetoed by Mayor Brown, and Ammiano tabled it. In early 2003, THD, Inc. submitted its full EIR to the City, and it is still, at this writing, in review. While all of this hullabaloo went on, life continued at the BHNC.

Another initiative currently underway is revitalization work along Bernal's Mission Street corridor. In 2002, the Affordable Housing and Community Organizing departments received a generous grant from the Surdna Foundation to reach out to residents and merchants along this stretch to talk about what revitalization would look like there. Some variables were transportation of all kinds, housing, safety, economic sustainability for new and long-time residents, and finding a capital project, some kind of visible construction that could anchor the more ephemeral growth that would happen on the street. Meetings, blueprints and phone calls abound, and the next goal is to create a community plan for the area. This is a place that those who are interested can get involved by calling Ron Morgan in BHNC's Community Organizing department. In 2002, BHNC began a new chapter in its relationship with the Excelsior district. The Youth Services department, as the lead agency in the Greater Mission Consortium and with the help of the recently-elected Supervisor Sandoval, helped to find and set up an expanded office for the coalition, a 2,200 square foot store front on Mission street. The new office is a portal into the GMC's full array of youth services, offering expanded educational, recreational, drop-in and support, plus a computer lab. BHNC has also begun working closely with the Excelsior Action Group (EAG), a neighborhood organization made up of residents, merchants and other local organizations who are working on a community-driven vision for the area's future. Part of BHNC's work with EAG-based on the experience and skills it developed in Bernal—is to increase the

participation and diversity of community residents and merchants in the group. A larger goal of the EAG is to help the Excelsior's Mission Street become a vital commercial corridor and increase community pride and social investment. You have to admit—the BHNC is aging gracefully. Over the last three years, it has more than doubled its membership, surpassing 1,000 households in June of this year. The Youth Services department has begun working in a new coalition of SF youth service agencies called the Outer Mission Community Support Network, focusing on at-risk children ages eight to fourteen. In the Excelsior, the BHNC is partnering with the Excelsior Action Group in starting the Excelsior Neighborhood Commercial Corridor Revitalization project, or ENCCR (pronounced "encore"). This project organized Safe'r Treat trick-or-treating last October, the decorating of the Excelsior's Mission Street and other celebrations last December, and now they are having the first-annual Excelsior Festival, the newest addition to San Francisco's vibrant street fair scene (Sunday, October 12. Yes, you can go to that and Fiesta on the Hill!). On July first this year, BHNC got City funding to start NEST services for the Excelsior's homebound seniors, and is opening an office to coordinate these on October first. Also in October, BHNC is breaking ground on thirty-seven units of affordable housing for elders with in-house services provided by the Senior Services department, to be finished in 2004. The Affordable Housing department is also, always, looking to increase the pool of high quality inexpensive homes in the City to help maintain its economic diversity.

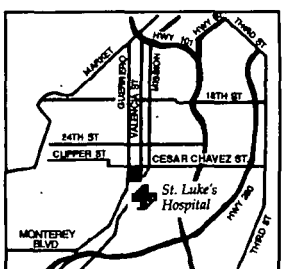
The Bernalians of today are as highly creative, energetic and full of civic pride as their progenitors, partly because they still have a number of these founders working with them side-by-side. The secret to the Bernal Heights Neighborhood Center's success is that it has not remained a city upon a hill, but has worked in the valleys, in the flatlands, the barrios, the streets and under the dome of City Hall to become a byword for positive action and neighbor-to-neighbor engagement. The BHNC has built a complex set of skills to continue addressing its mission:

...To preserve and enhance the ethnic, cultural and economic diversity and well-being of the community. We work to build a strong community for all, with a focus on the needs of low and moderate-income people. We do this by providing services to support and increase opportunities for seniors, youth and others most at-risk; by preserving and expanding access to affordable housing; and by building the neighborhood's power and capacity to achieve these goals. We commit to being a provider of essential services, a builder of community, and a force for organizing neighborhood change.

And let's face it, they still have plenty of brass. ■



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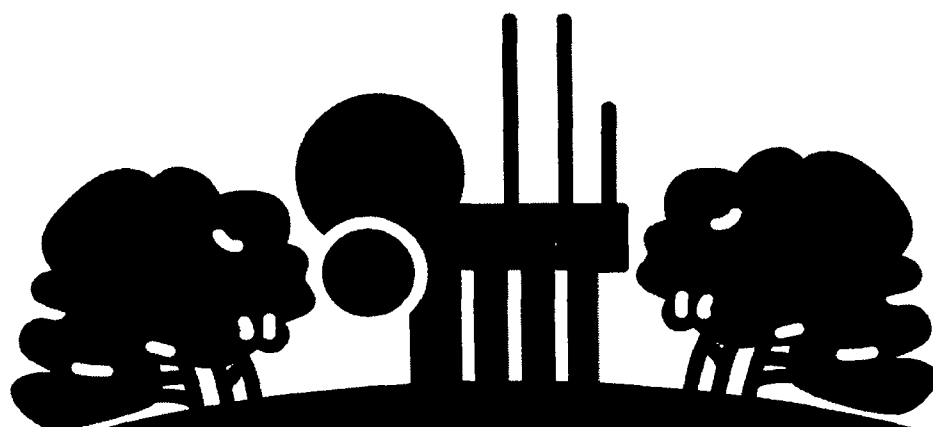
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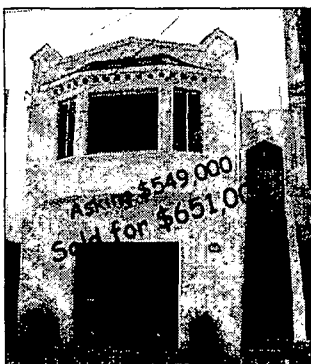
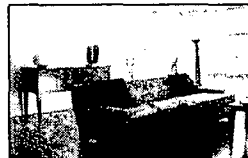
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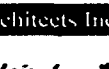
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